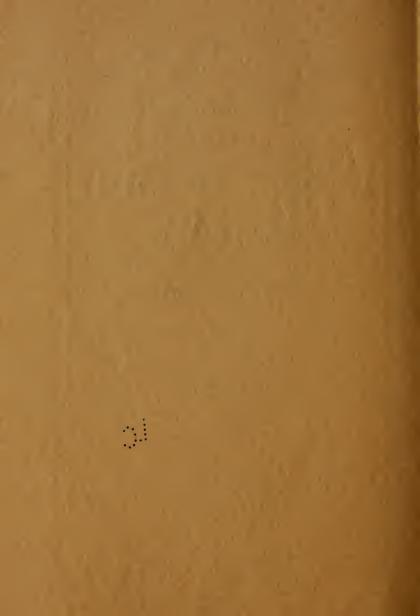
Dramatic Plays for Young Peoples' Societies

Don't bother Anton.

For 8 males, 2 females and 3 children

PRICE 20 CENTS

ANTIGO PUBLISHING COMPANY ANTIGO, WISCONSIN



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DON'T BOTHER ANTON

PS635

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Anton, the sick man.

Anton's wife and children

Joe

White

Bass

Jake

Nack

Lyle

Mrs. Buttermouth

Three children.

Doctor.

SCENE: Sitting Room. Anton on couch, covered up by comforter.

Neighbors calling on Anton.

PROPERTIES:

Couch, Comforter, Pillow, Table, Chairs, Paper, Glass with Medicine and Spoon.

ENTRANCE: Right and Left.

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DON'T BOTHER ANTON.

(Anton on couch, against the center wall, his wife at his side, children at left door, Doctor at right door.)

Doctor (leaving.) Now, Mrs., I want to tell you, your husband must not be bothered, by all means let him rest; understand me? He's overworked himself and his nerves are out of whack. There's nothing else the matter with him. If you don't want him to grow worse, you must keep him quiet and everything in the house as quiet as possible. If he rests well, he'll get over this spell. Understand?

Wife. Yes, doctor, I get you — I know what you mean. Did you hear, Anton, what the doctor said? Sure, doctor, I'll manage to keep him quiet. (to children) Bst! Don't make any noise; papa must not be bothered (threatens them with finger.)

Doctor. And of that medicine you give him every ten minutes when he's awake.

Wife. Sure, every ten minutes. I understand.

Poctor. And don't let anybody disturb his rest. Keep gossipy callers away from him as much as possible. Remember that Anton must not be bothered.

Wife. Why, certainly, doctor, I'll keep everything quiet (to children.) Why are you standing there at the door? Your father must rest. Didn't you hear? Hurry up and get out'n here. Go, I say. Wait, I'll fix you (grabs broom, turns over chair in her haste, clubs children, scolds and chases them out.—Anton moans.) Such are children!

Poctor. Don't make so much noise yourself. Didn't I

tell you to keep everything quiet in here? Your loud talking and noisy manners irritate the patient. Don't forget that. Good-bye. I'll be back in a short while (exit.)

Wife. I'll manage to keep everything quiet all right enough. Good-by, doctor, (to Anton) Did you hear it, Anton? You should keep perfectly quiet and don't talk to anybody, the doctor says, otherwise you'll be very sick. Your nerves are out o' whack, he says. Your nerves! Dear me, what a fright that gave me! Just think of it, your nerves are out 'o order! Have you got pains, Anton!

Anton. (shakes head.)

Wife. Hold on, before I forget, you must take some medicine (gives medicine to him.) There. Does it taste bad! It's all right as long as it does you good. But I would like to know how your nerves got to be entirely out o' whack. You always were in good trim. How did you get it on your nerves? There's always one bad luck following the other ... Think you can sleep a little? Wait, I'll shake up the pillow for you (shakes pillow heedlessly so Anton's head moves with the shaking.) There, that'll give you rest, I should think. Does it feel good now? Can I bring you something to drink? What do you want!

Anton. Don't bother me, that's all. Oh dear, my head! Wife. Rest is what you want! Certainly (looks about and sees children at the entrance, screams) There again? Didn't I tell you to keep out o' here, and that your papa needs rest? (jumps up, grabs broom, upsets chairs, chases children out) I'll fix you kids!

Anton(moans.) O dear, my head! Can't you keep quiet!

You're making more noise than all the rest.

Wife. What? I'm making noise? Dear me, what am I after doing all this while? Am I not keeping things quiet so you may rest? But that's the way you always are (weeps): Always blaming me — putting the fault with me. I may do anything to please you, — scolding and fault-finding is all I get of it, never a word of praise — no thanks. (raising self up) Now if I hadn't cared for the whole house-hold and for everything else, where would you be? I do wish you had got'n some one else for a wife, she would have showed you who's boss. The trouble with me is that I'm too good for you, always too good.

Anton. (puts hand to forehead, moans.) Oh!..Oh!..

Wife. Whats the matter? Are the flies troubling you? Can't you sleep? I'll drive the flies away from you (picks up paper and fans him.) Now keep quiet just for a minute and try to sleep. (Fans him for a while silently, occasionally hitting his face with paper.) There! I'm forgetting your medicine (gives medicine). I'm sure you'll have to take this regularly, if you want to get well (looks at clock.) For pity's sake, it's only five minutes since I gave you the other dose. Why don't you say so if the time isn't up? You don't seem to care the least bit whether you'll get better or not. I think the best way 'll be to put the alarm clock right in front of you (puts alarm clock on chair in front of his face; alarm rattles and startles Anton.) Such a fool clock! (tries to stop alarm.)

Anton. Oh! That kills me! That - -

Wife (trying to stop alarm.) Don't get excited at little things like that. Keep cool, that's what the doctor

says. Now, I wonder what clamp I must turn in order to stop this racket (clock stops.) There! I fixed it this time. Now be still (takes up paper and fans him, striking his face at intervals.)

Anton. Can't you stop hitting me?

Wife. Did I hit you? Dear me, the flies are just awful. I bet that fly-paper we got of the druggist isn't worth a cent. I hear somebody coming (throws down paper and walks to entrance.) How do you do, Joe? Walk in, please. How are you?

Joe (enters.) How are you, people? I heard Anton is awfully sick, so I that it my duty to look in.

Wife. It's awfully bad, Joe. I can't tell you the trouble I have in keeping him quiet. The doctor says he must not be bothered, or he won't stand for no consequences. But do you imagine I am able to keep him quiet? He talks and scolds and complains all the time and won't take a word from me. Step up and look at him, Joe. here he is (to Anton.) Hello, wake up, Anton. Joe is here.

Anton (remains on couch, face toward the wall).

Wife (with raised voice). Anton, are you sleeping? Joe is come for a call.

Ant. (slowly turns head, looks at Joe.)

Joe. Hello, Anton! How are you? (shakes hands with Anton forcefully). Was just stepping in to inquire how you are getting along. Pretty bad, eh? (examines his face deliberately). Why, you don't look as the you'd get over this, Anton, do you? Well, well! (shakes head, wonderingly). Still I know of something which would help you (feels Anton's pulse and forehead.) You've also got a high fever.

Ant. (feebly.) Yes — yes— — (feigns sleep after this). Joe (after a while). Where does it hurt you, Anton? Ant. (silent.)

Wife (shaking Anton). He asks you where you've got pain.

Ant. (faintly.) Aw, don't bother me!

Joe. We won't bother you.— I had it just the way you're having it. I know just about how a man feels in your circumstances. Wish you could have seen me then. Think you'll be able to sleep? I at that time couldn't sleep a wink. Well, try it anyhow. Musn't think of anything, that's the easiest way. I found that out myself.

Ant. (turns toward wall).

Joe (to wife.) What kind o' medicine has he got?

Wife (shows him). This here he is to take every ten minutes.

Joe (smells of cork.) Just what I had, the very thing!

Wife. Did it help you?

Joe. Not a bit. Better throw it out o' the window. I wouldn't be living today if I had swallowed all that stuff. I've got my own cure, you know.

Wife. What did you use?

Joe. A very simple remedy. You'll have to take hold of this sickness entirely different than the doctors will. I put a hot poultice on my forehead, a chunk of ice on my stomach and mustard plasters on my soles. That's what cured me.

Wife. I've never heard of that before.

Joe. I believe you. It's my own invention, you know.

The doctors don't know about it. Look, it's like this:

The hot poultices 'll drive the fever down into the stomach where it has to pass under the chunk of ice

and get cooled down; then the mustard plaster on the foot soles draws the fever out, and there you are, hale and hearty as a wood-chuck.

Wife. That seems to be quite reasonable. I guess I'll try it on Anton, if the doctor's medicine doesn't cure him. Hey, Anton, are you list'ning?

Anton (remains silent.)

Wife (shakes him up). Anton, look here! Have you heard what Joe has been telling me?

Ant. (surly). It's all the same to me — let me have rest. Joe (insultedly). Why, it's only on your behalf I'm here. If you don't care for me, I may be gone again (turns as if to leave.) I don't get paid for this, nohow. May just as well go.

White (enters just as soon as Joe opens door. How do you do! All is well, I s'pose.

Wife. Not at all well, White, not at all well. Anton there's got it. Doctor says he must have rest or something very serious may grow out o' it. Joe here thinks he won't pull thru.

White. How do you do, Joe? (shakes hand with Joe.)
Joe. I'm well, thank you. Was just looking after An-

ton. He looks pretty bad, doesn't he?

White. You're right. How you do. Anton? How are you? (offers hand to Ant. who doesn't stir). Hello! (to wife) Is he sleeping?

Wife. Can't tell: just a moment ago he was wide awake. He's so awfully restless. I think it would be a very blessing if he would go asleep. The doctor says he must not be bothered.

White. I won't bother him (to Ant.) Are you sleeping,

Anton? (takes Anton's hand and shakes it violently).

Anton (feebly). How could I sleep with such a racket about me!

White. Oh, I see you're still awake. I thot so. Happy day to you, Anton. How are you? feeling bad, eh? Yes, you're right, there's nothing better than health. That's what I always say (takes chew tobacco from pocket and bites off — hands to Joe who also takes a bite. Both sit down.) Hm, I believe there's some more coming.

Jake (enters.) Wish you well, all together. How-de-do. (shakes hands all around.)

The others (shaking hands with him in succession.) How-de-do, Jake.

Jake (wiping his forehead.) This is beastly hot to-day.

Joe. Yes, one has to do a lot of sweating (draws handker-chief and wipes forehead).

White. The sun is awful hot to-day.

Joe. Truly, truly.

Jake (stepping up to couch, grabbing Anton's hand, shaking it violently). Well, Anton, how are you getting along? Fairly well, I s'pose. Well, I should say you are looking very bad. What's the matter?

Ant. (moans). Oh, dearl

Wife. I believe the doctor himself doesn't know what ails Anton. He says its on account of the hot weather and work and worry, that's where his fever comes from, he says. Come, Anton, take a teaspoonful of medicine (gives him medicine). Are you getting better already? No? Well, I wish I only knew what to do for you.

Ant. (surly). Let me alone, that's all. Can't I get one moment's rest?

Wife, Joe, I guess I'll go and fix some hot poultices for him (Exit.)

Jake. Anton is right, I think. Rest is the best what you can do for him; then nature will adjust itself. I don't think much of medicine (draws pipe, fills and lights it.)

White. I'm thinking the same way. If something is wrong with me, I say to my wife, Mother, hand me the bottle with the castor oil.

Joe. Castor oil? Booh! Not for me. I hate the looks of it. You may poison potato bugs with it, for all I care

Jake. There you remind me — the other day I got some poison powder to kill them, but it didn't seem to do them any good. Can you tell me how to put it on?

Joe. What did you do with it?

Jake. Well, in the first place I put it on the bugs, but they crawled away with it. After that I put it on the potato plants, but that's of no use I find.

Joe. I believe the best way is to catch the bugs first, then open their mouth and put the poison inside.

Jake. Oh, is that the way to do it?

Joe. The only way! (lights pipe).

White. Well, I always catch them and then maul them with my boot heel. That's a sure way, I find.

Jake. Oh, yes, you're right, just as good as the poison powder.

Joe. Anyhow, potato bugs are awful bad this season.

Joe. That's the fault of the weather, depend on that. Why, last year....

Wife (enters Bass). Walk in. Others are already calling on Anton.

Bass. Hello! Hello! — Hello! (shakes hands all around.)
Well, how are you?

White. So la-la, always on two legs, as you see. (All laugh, more so White himself. Bass sits).

Bass. You here too, White. Why, you've got four legs

under you, same number as a cow has got.

White (insultedly). How's that? Four legs under me? I won't take that from you. I'll see if I have to take chunks like that. This shall cost you 10 dollars for slandering me, I'll see the lawyer about it to-morrow. You all who are present have heard him saying this. I'll show this man who's got four legs.

All.

pell-

mell

Joe. I havn't heard anything-don't know anything.

Wife. Why, you don't want to sue each other and go to law?

Jake. I didn't pay attention - don't know anything.

Bass. Let me finish my say, White. I was talking about the chair legs. There are four under you, arn't there? All (laughing). 't was only a joke, White.

White. Well-then, of course - if it's only a joke --Bass (walks up to couch). How are you faring, Anton? Anton (silent).

Bass (bellows in Anton's ear). I was saying, how you're getting along (grabs A.'s hand and shakes it violently).

Anton (sighing). This is getting worse.

Bass. Aw, get out, Anton, you musn't say that. Always take things rather easy, keep a-kicking, I say; keep your head cool and your stockings warm, is my say. Don't give up, or you'll be a goner.

Ant. (turns to wall, beckons him to go away.)

Bass (to the others). I said so right away, when I heard about it, Anton has got it good and hard this time,

said. If I look at him from the left corner of the eye, I know right away what's the matter with him (lights pipe). This case (pointing finger towards Anton) is a bad one. The father of my cousin's brother-in-law had it the same way. 'He won't get well again', I said when he lay down, and so it turned out, all right enough. When he got better once more, they said to me 'Now you see what you know about it! He's as well now as he ever was before.' — Just wait! I told them, you'll find out by'm-by; if I look at a man from the left corner of my eye, I know how it'll pan out. So let us wait and see. And what do you think about it? It didn't take him six more years and he was gone.

Joe. To be sure, he got a relapse! What do doctors know about it!

White. Of what did he die?

Bass. Well, it wasn't exactly like that, you know. He was working in a stone quarry and about twenty tons of rock fell on him and crushed him.

White. Why, that had nothing to do with his former sickness, had it?

Joe. I don't see how that resulted from his sickness....

Bass. Well, you know if he hadn't been sick before, he would have been stronger and in a better condition to stand the load, you see. If you don't take a better hold of Anton than the doctors will, he'll never get over this, for that's what I told the father of my cousin's brother-in-law.

Jake. I think you're correct, Bass.

Bass. Of course, I am, and Anton wants to be treated differently from this, I say.

Joe. That's what I've been saying all this while. You

must draw out the fever, I say. If I was his doctor I'd put a mustard plaster on his feet, a chunk of ice on his stomach and hot poultices on his head. These 'll drive the heat away from his brain so it has to pass under that chunk of ice and gets cooled off; then the mustard plaster on his foot sole will draw it out, and there you are!

Jake. I believe you're right.

Bass. Think so? I tell you you'd kill him sooner 'n a cat jumps out'n the pantry. I say talk it out'o his head, that's what helps a sick person; cause him to laugh like the dickens, tell him to forget his ailment, and make him rest well and long. That's it!

Joe (laughs sneeringly and makes signs of distractedness).

Jake. That's so, I believe you, Bass. Whenever I take a couple of whiskeys and two or three mugs of beer, I feel just fine and don't notice anything of sickness.

Bass. Now watch me cheer up Anton. I'll make a well man of him in less than no time (sits down at foot end of couch and tries to draw Anton's attention by coughing and clearing his throat). Hello, Anton. — Hello, I say. You're feeling fine, ain't you?

Anton (remains silent).

Bass. Hello, Anton! Fine weather we're having today, isn't it? Only just a trifle hot, eh? (pokes Anton's ribs.)
Fine weather, I say. Are you sleeping?

Joe (whistles thru his teeth as tho ridiculing Bass).

Bass. Here, if you're sleeping, just tell me so, and I'll go away,

Anton (moans.)

Bass (to the others). There, did you hear? He's picking up (to Anton). That's right, Anton, always be jolly

and keep your chin raised up. We're only trying to cheer you.

Wife. Here, take some medicine, Anton (gives him).

Bass. That tastes horrid, doesn't it, Anton? Eh? I believe you'd like your sour kraut and Frankforts better. eh? (pokes A.'s ribs.) That's intended for a joke, Anton.

Anton (strikes at Bass' ear with hand). That's intended for a joke also. Oh, dear me! Why can't you people let me rest! This is almost unbearable.

Wife. Dear me, Anton, what are you doing! You're raving wild.

All Jake. It was only meant to be a joke, Anton.

pell { White. Anton, you ought to be able to take a joke mell | without getting roiled, oughtn't you?

Bass. Oh, you are getting to be as rough as burlap. Who would strike a friend like that!

Nack (and Lyle enter). How-ye-do. (shaking hand all around, repeating 'How-ye-do' at every shake).

Lyle (follows Nack in same manner.) How-ye-do.

(Much bustle and noise)

Joe (shakes hand). How do you do, Nack. (to Lyle) same to you, Lyle.

White (shakes hand). So, la, la, Nack. (to Lyle) Same to you, Lyle. Always hustling, as you see. Bass (shaking hand) Ever shaking along, you know. (to Lyle) How's your wife and children,

mell Lyle.

All

pell-

Jake (shaking hand). Tolerable, that's all. How is yourself? (to Lyle) Fine, old boy. Same to you. Wife (shaking hand). Glad you came, Naul. (to Lyle) Thank you. How is Mrs. Lyle.

Nack (turning to couch.) How is the world using you, Anton? Pretty bad, eh?

Lyle (to Anton.) Why don't you get up and plough, Anton? Too hot, eh?

Nack, My, what a fever you've got, man! You are almost looking like a dead man.

Lyle. Well, do you think you'll pull thru, Anton?

Nack. Tell me how it happened, Anton. How did you catch it?

Anton (rising in wrath, stares at them).

Nack. I mean how it came that you got sick.

Anton (crying, excitedly). Can't you sheepheads see that you are killing me? I tell you for the last time give me a rest.

Nack and Lyle (stand off, as the frightened.)

Joe. He's been acting that way ever since I'm here.

There's no use talking, he won't be quiet.

Jake. That's so, I can prove it.

All, pellmell Bass. He gets wilder and more restless every minute. I've never seen the like of it neither with man nor with beasts.

White. I've also been trying to quiet him down, but it was of no use.

Wife (weeping.) Anton, Anton, dear, will you take a drink of water? Nice cool water?

Anton. Let me alone, don't you hear? I want rest, (screams) rest!—rest!

Wife (weeping). That's how he's acting all the time! I don't know what to do (sits in corner, covers face with apron).

Nack (to the others, pointing with thumb over his back towards Anton). I'm afraid he won't make it very long any more. See if I ain't correct (fills and lights pipe). Has some one got a matel?

Lyle (grabbing his vest pockets for matches). We all have

to go that way one time or another. No, sir, I haven't got any (starts filling his pipe).

(Others hand over matches.)

Nack. Yes, that's so. We can't get around that.

Lyle, I know very well what's the matter with him (nodding towards Anton). It's the same thing I've had once. It started at the lower parts of my legs and crawled upwards (showing this with his hand) until it settled on my stomach. Shucks, how that crawled and gnawed and pulle i! I can't tell you how! My wife had made dumplings with bacon for dinner, something I can never get enough of; still I couldn't eat more n six or seven of them dumplings, I simply had to give up. My stomach wouldn't take'm. Isn't that so, Anton? I'm sure your stomach won't hold more'n that, (Anton remains silent). After that it went up here (shows with hand on breast) and then it kept on rising higher and higher until it settled right on my brain (the others giggle and snicker); Lyle does not notice it.) I just behaved like a drunken man-always walked round about in a circle. Isn't that so, Anton! I'm sure you couldn't walk straight even if you tried. And not the least noise nor talking could I stand. I just said to my wife, 'Can't you keep your fly-trap shut? Your babble and gossip 'll surely make me crazy. I simply can't stand it any longer. Nobody will believe how bad I felt. Feel the same way. Anton?

Anton. Yes. I'll soon grow crazy too, if you don't stop your silly babble. Oh dear, can't these people see how I'm suffering!

Nack. I believe you, Anton. I felt the very same way and had to suffer and suffer — nobody would believe me if I was going to tell you. The worst of it was when I

came down with rheumatism.....

Joe(interruptingly). I can sing the same song. Two years

ago last winter when I.....

Wife(interrupting him and rising). Ah, there's Mrs. Buttermouth!..Just walk in, Mrs. Buttermouth. I s'pose

you want to see how Anton is getting along.

Mrs. Buttermouth(enters, followed by three children, each carrying a bottle). How do you do. How are you, every one of you. Yes, I'm going to call on Anton in order to see how he is improving. 'John'. I said to John who is my husband, 'John, 'I said, John, did you hear? Anton is reported very sick, almost dying, they say. You ought to go over and see how he is.' -' Let me alone,' says he' with stuff like that. If Anton is sick, the proper thing to do then is to let him alone and give him a chance to rest. If they need somebody to stay over night with him, they'll most likely tell us so.'-Says I to John, 'John,' says I, 'John, it doesn't look nice if no one goes over there. What'll people think of us, if we never stop to look in at their place?'- Says John, who is my husband, says he,' Anton will be very glad if nobody calls to disturb and molests him. This calling and coming, going and talking and such foolish behavior is enough to kill any horse, to say nothing of a man. Now you musn't think that John doesn't care anything about his neighbors -he simply is of that exerordnary way, always different than the rest of us. (approaches Anton) But I am forgetting to bid you the time of the day. How are you, Anton? Why, you look as colorless as a shroud! Dear me! How you scare me. - I've brot along a few articles which may do you some good. At least it'll be well for you to try them. This here (points

to bottle in her hand) is an excellent rubbing oil. (to children) Hand me over those other bottles.—This is good for almost anything. It smells very strong, but it penetrates to the very marrow of the bone(puts bottle on table). This here is an excellent liniment for rubbing in, but you must rub quite hard(puts bottle on table). And this here (holds bottle against light)— well, to say the truth—I don't know myself what it contains (smells at the cork.) Phew! That's strong stuff. Well, anyhow, it certainly is good for something, and if the others don't do you any good you may just as well try this. But don't take it internally—only for rubbing externally, you know (stands back, aghast). For pity's sake, what's the matter with Anton? He's turning the whites of his eyes about—Help!—Help!—help!

All(jumping up and pushing towards Anton, who has risen)
Anton(waving and brandishing his arms, distorting face,
screaming), Oh -- Oh! - this is killing me - I'm
going crazy - Help! - Help me from my friends!
(they try to take hold of his hands and arms and to quiet

him down again)

Nack. No, Anton, you musn't you musn't believe that!

Wife. There! Now he's turning his head — going crazy. (Folding hands above head, lamenting.)

Joe. Hurry and get some hot poultices — a chunk of ice — some mustard plasters ... Hurry or you'll be too late.

Bass. It's all a joke, Anton, just keep quiet; they're jollying you, that's all.

Jake. Be quiet, Anton, this'll pass soon and you'll be all right again. See, we're here and won't harm you.

All, pellmell (While above is going on doctor enters and remains at entrance as the wondering what this all is about)

Doctor. Have you all gone crazy? What are you doing here?

Anton (screaming.) They're killing me - killing me - killing me - killing me - me!

Joe. How dare you say that, Anton. This is where our ways part. Shame on you.

Bass. This settles the hash. Killing him! I'd like to know who is killing him.

Jake. That's enough for me, I'm going (turns as to leave.)

All, pellmell Nack. He certainly is out'o his mind — calling us murderers!

White. Killing him! — Who would'a thot this of Anton!

Bass. That's what you get for being good to other people.

Mrs. Butterm. And after all I believe John, my husband, is right when he says, let sick people alone.

Doctor. And what's this rubbish here? (takes up bottles from table, smells at one and throws it out) Hm, hm! Now I do actually believe they are trying to murder this poor fellow. (to wife). Didn't I tell you he must have perfect rest and no disturbance, no excitement, no callers? What in the name of reason and common sense made you prop this house with callers and tobacco smoke and so forth?

Wife (weeps). They were only calling on him. We haven't done anything bad, to be sure, only trying to keep him quiet; and in spite of all this he grew worse.

Doctor. No wonder! Why did you go at it in such a round-

about-way? You would have had succeeded sooner if you'd clubbed his head or hung him to the ceiling, he would have become quiet in a minute or two to be sure. Why, people, calling in the manner you have called here on sick people, you'd murder a ten year old ox inside of ten minutes, to say nothing of Anton.— Get out of this, every blessed soul of you, in less than 30 seconds. Hurry now!

Joe. Well, this is what I call fresh. Good-by. (exit)

White. Good-by. Hope you'll get well again.
This'll do me for a long time. (exit)

Bass. This is a rough and tough place anyhow; no wonder they're treating people like dogs here. (exit)

Jake. I'll never call on Anton again, so much is settled. (exit)

Lyle. Well, now — well, now - - this is how you throw people out'o doors, I s'pose. (exit)

Nack. Never met such a ruffian doctor before. I,m sure. (exit)

Doctor. It's neighbors they call themselves, and brutes they are.

CURTAIN



All'
pellmell
pushing towards
door.



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